

Maryland Historical Trust

Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties Form

Inventory No.M:26/15/4

1. Name of Property (indicate preferred name)

☐ historic Rueben Hill House
☐ other

2. Location

☐ street and number 305 Lincoln Avenue ☐ not for publication
☐ city, town Rockville, Md ☐ vicinity
☐ county Montgomery

3. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

☐ name Norma H. Duffin
☐ street and number 710 Douglass Avenue ☐ telephone
☐ city, town Rockville ☐ state Md ☐ zip code 20850

4. Location of Legal Description

☐ courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Montgomery County ☐ liber 11298 ☐ folio 378
☐ city, town Rockville ☐ tax map GR33 ☐ tax parcel ☐ tax ID number 00180976

5. Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☐ Contributing Resource in National Register District
☐ Contributing Resource in Local Historic District
☐ Determined Eligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Determined Ineligible for the National Register/Maryland Register
☐ Recorded by HABS/HAER
☐ Historic Structure Report or Research Report at MHT
☐ Other: _____

6. Classification

Category	Ownership	Current Function	Resource Count
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	Contributing
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce/trade	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> site		<input type="checkbox"/> defense	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> object		<input type="checkbox"/> domestic	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
		<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
		<input type="checkbox"/> funerary	<input type="checkbox"/> Total
		<input type="checkbox"/> government	
		<input type="checkbox"/> health care	
		<input type="checkbox"/> industry	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> vacant/not in use	
		<input type="checkbox"/> other:	

Number of Contributing Resources
previously listed in the Inventory

7. Description

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Condition

<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> altered

Prepare both a one paragraph summary and a comprehensive description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

SUMMARY

The house at 305 Lincoln Avenue is a rectangular side-gabled three-bay by one-bay, two-story frame structure with a rear two-story kitchen wing and porch. A shallow-hipped-roof porch extends across the front of the house. The roof is asphalt shingles. The foundation is random coursed fieldstone parged with concrete. A brick chimney extends from the rear slope of the roof. The house is larger and older than other houses in the 300 block of Lincoln Avenue, which are a mix of early twentieth century vernacular wood frame two-story houses and mid-twentieth century one-story brick and frame ramblers.

DESCRIPTION



The subject house faces north on Lincoln Avenue on a narrow and deep midblock lot. Large shrubs screen the secluded rear yard. A rectangular shed-roofed building with narrow lap siding is in the rear yard, and another small frame shed-roofed building perhaps a former privy, is off the southeast corner of the house on the lot line.

This simple 2-1/2-story frame three-bay by three-bay

four-room house is one room deep with an attached kitchen wing on the rear and typical of vernacular rural or farm dwellings of the period. It has a composition shingled cross-gable roof and the original exterior sheathing has been covered with asphalt wood-grain shingles. The foundation is rough-coursed fieldstone parged with cement. There is an interior brick chimney with arched top at the center front and a plain brick chimney at the southwest corner of the rear. The original "L" shape of the structure has been filled on the southeast side by a shed-roofed addition. It probably was an open side porch with sleeping porch above as originally built. A cinder block rear porch has been added to the infill. The

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house incorporates part of an earlier, smaller dwelling as shown by the presence of a window in the wall between the two first story rooms.

Modestly built, this utilitarian house has little remaining ornamentation other than the stick work ladder trim underneath the front porch lintel. Its 2-1/2-story arrangement of front dwelling and rear kitchen wing identify it as predating its predominantly 20th century neighbors. Windows are 2/2 with plain surrounds, now flanked by plastic non- functional shutters, and the upper windows are shorter than the lower story ones.

The three-bay north (front) façade has regular fenestration, one window in each second story bay and one in the first and third bays on the first story. The center bay has a wood panel exterior door with eight small lights at the top. The full width front porch is one step up from the front cement sidewalk and has a low hipped asphalt-shingled roof supported by four square posts connected by a plain stick and rail ladder lattice at the top. A balustrade of shaped and pierced slats Jigsawn in a diamond format connects the end posts to the house.



The three-bay east facade has a small square four light attic window in the gable and one central window on each story of the main block. The rear addition has a string of three windows on the second story and one window in the first story of the rear wing. The infill addition has no south fenestration.

An exterior square brick chimney is at the southeast corner of the wing. A small shed- roofed rear cinderblock porch is on the east and the west half is sided with asphalt shingles. A two light window is in the cinder block side and a wood panel exterior door with four lights is in the asphalt side.

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The south (rear) facade is composed of the gabled rear wing and the infill, previously described. One four light square window is in the gable. One window is on the second story, and one is on the first.

The three-bay west facade has an irregular fenestration and is formed of the one bay front and two bay rear wing. There is one small four light window in the gable and one window in each story in the gabled front section. One window is in the wing center bay, second story, and a small square opening is in the wing center bay, first story. One window is in the south bay, first story.



West Façade of 305 Lincoln Avenue – Photo taken August 2002 by Harry Smith

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Outbuildings in the rear yard of 305 Lincoln Avenue – Photo by Harry Smith, August 2002



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Photos of 305 Lincoln Avenue taken in 1986

8. Significance

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Period	Areas of Significance	Check and justify below		
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> health/medicine	<input type="checkbox"/> performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> invention	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-1999	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment/ recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 2000-	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ethnic heritage	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/ settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> social history
	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning		<input type="checkbox"/> maritime history	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation		<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other: _____

Specific dates: 1880

Architect/Builder

Construction dates 1880, 1917

Evaluation for:

☐ National Register

☒ Maryland Register

☐ not evaluated

Prepare a one-paragraph summary statement of significance addressing applicable criteria, followed by a narrative discussion of the history of the resource and its context. (For compliance projects, complete evaluation on a DOE Form – see manual.)

Significance

The home of Carlisle Blair Hill has been occupied by four generations of the Hill family, one of the pioneer families in the black community of Lincoln Park. One of the oldest surviving and intact structures in Lincoln Park, the original three to four room vernacular dwelling house was constructed in 1880 before the subdivision of Lincoln Park was created. Additions and improvements to the original house were made about 1917 and all improvements since are considered reversible. The house is a large prosperous house and not typical of modest vernacular houses or rental properties built in the early years of Lincoln Park and Montgomery County.

History and Support

Lincoln Park was one of the first subdivisions in Montgomery County available to blacks. The 300 block of Lincoln Avenue was the first section of Lincoln Park to be offered for sale and was anchored by the pre-existing subject property. In fact, the presence of several black families owning and occupying property in the area probably influenced white merchant William Wallace Welch to purchase and subdivide nearby property for sale to African-Americans.

The 1879 Hopkins Atlas documents the presence of five black households in an area north of the Rockville town limits and just east of the B&O railroad tracks.¹ Another home was built in this neighborhood in 1880² when former Confederate soldier, Simeon Berry, purchased approximately one acre of land from Chandler Keys. Two days later "one half of this land was sold for \$50 to Reuben

1. Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington Including The County of Montgomery: Philadelphia, G.M.Hopkins (1879) p.9. (attachment 8.4)
2. Montgomery County Sentinel of November 26, 1880, carried the brief obituary of Mr. Berry. He was a native of Alabama, who settled in the County after the Civil War. The house is dated to 1880 based on the absence of any other structure at the site in the 1879 Atlas, nor was any building belonging to Chandler Keys in the vicinity.

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Thomas Hill, the son of Rueben Hill.³ The remainder of this lot and the small Berry cottage thereon became the property of Reuben Hill, father of Reuben Thomas Hill, in December of 1880 by the last Will and Testament of Simeon Berry. "The real and personal property devised to Mr. Hill consisted of "My house and lot of ground whereon I now dwell purchased of Chandler Keys ... one horse and-wagon, post machiene (sic), tools and house furniture".⁴ Among the items of house furniture were a looking glass, bedstead, table and chairs.

The elder Reuben Hill (1832-1915), a former slave of the Stonestreet family, was age 35 or 36 at the time of the 1867 Census of Former Slaves. His marriage to free black Rachel Martin was not legally recognized due to his status as a slave, but as Rachel was a free "mulatto", their children were also free. She was listed as Head of the Household in the 1860 Census. Listed in her household was a son Reuben, age 4 (Reuben Thomas Hill).

Reuben (Senior) and Rachel were legally married in 1871 and three years later purchased acreage on part of the original land grant "Burgundy". This land lay east of the present Horners Lane; the home they constructed there is one of the five shown on the 1879 Hopkins Atlas (Attachment 8.4).

The Assessment Records for 1881 list the Hill family's three houses:

Reuben Hill was assessed for an improved lot near Rockville with a value of \$300 ("Burgundy" or Horner's Lane property) and also one acre of "Valentine's Garden Enlarged", improved value \$150 (305 Lincoln).

Reuben Thomas Hill owned lot "bought of Berry" with improvement valued at \$200 (Unidentified Lincoln Park lot).

In 1891, Union veteran William Wallace Welsh, who owned the General Store near the depot, purchased eight acres of "Valentine's Garden Enlarged" and laid out two blocks (31 lots) intended as building sites for sale to blacks. He named the subdivision "Congo Park" then changed it to "Lincoln Park": the two blocks lay on either side of a street named Lincoln Avenue. The eastern boundary of this development was measured from the Reuben Hill property on "Burgundy." Land Record JA23/391 states that the subdivision begins... "at a stone in front of Reuben Hill's lot on the west side of Shaw's Lane."

3. Montgomery County Land Records EBP22/385 and 387 (1880).

4. Montgomery County Will Records RWC6/262 - The Last Will and Testament of Simeon Berry. In the 1880 Census, Simeon Berry was listed as a white, 52-year-old fence builder. He was illiterate, as he signed his name with an 'X'. His relationship to Reuben Hill is unknown, but Hill was to receive all monies due the Berry estate and pay all funeral expenses, so it is likely that Berry had no family.

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This first section of Lincoln Park measured 455.4 feet by 802 feet, as per Montgomery County Plat B-13. The western boundary is not mentioned in the deed, but is the subject site. The 305 Lincoln property is also the southern boundary of the one block "Addition to Lincoln Park" platted in 1892 as seen on the attached copy of Plat B-35 (Attachment 8.5).

The original dwelling built by Simeon Berry and willed to Reuben Hill was frame and known to have been one room wide by two rooms deep.^{5 6} A staircase leads to the second floor from the rear room, but it is not known whether the house was one story with loft or had a second floor originally. Several of the earliest Lincoln Park houses still show a one room by two room configuration, and that this size is typical of the times is illustrated in an advertisement for a "two-story frame dwelling with four rooms" for sale in Lincoln Park, appeared in the Montgomery County Sentinel of April 28, 1899.

Reuben Thomas Hill and his sister Sarah Hill Carlile (sic) purchased 305 Lincoln Avenue from their father in 1896 for \$200.⁷ Reuben Thomas Hill's wife Carrie Blair Hill owned a lot across the street but did not build upon it.

The additions made to the subject house are thought to date ca. 1917, two years after the death of the senior Reuben Hill. The Tax Records show a large increase in the value of the property, improved to a value of \$559 in 1918. Reuben Thomas Hill was a skilled carpenter, and therefore it is likely that the enlargement was his own work. The inventory of this estate in 1936 included an appraisal of his tools. Reuben Thomas Hill was also the long-time Sexton of Christ Episcopal Church; as such he would have been responsible for general maintenance and small repairs to the Church property.

The enlargement of the house included the addition of two rooms to the east side and the construction of a full width porch with a decorative cornice. Among the rooms added were a kitchen and pantry opening off a back porch. The porch probably housed a pump since none of the Lincoln Park homes had running water, electricity, or plumbing until close to mid-century. The house may have been increased to two full floors and an attic at this time. At the time of Reuben Thomas Hill's death in 1936 the house and lot were valued at \$2,000. The acreage had been increased to its original size by the addition of the property on the west, sold to the Sedgewicks in 1890, but returned to the Hills in 1924.

During the early years of the Hill ownership of 305 Lincoln Avenue, most of the lots in Lincoln Park and Addition to Lincoln Park had been sold. By 1920, fewer than 30 houses had been constructed; of

5. The contractor for a 1985 rehabilitation of the house described the presence of a window in what is now the wall between the two front rooms. The extant central chimney was used for fireplaces (now bricked up) but the parlor mantelpiece is still extant.

6. Land Records JA17/94 (1896). A marriage license was granted to Reuben Hill and Carrie Blair in 1879. Cemetery Records at the Montgomery County Historical Society list Carrie E. Hill (1861-1923).

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which seven were rental properties owned by Mr. Welsh.⁸ Residents of the area also remember that at least two log cabins remained for many years, reminders of the 19th century. Lincoln Park was not annexed to the City until 1950; four years later dusty Lincoln Avenue was paved.

Reuben Thomas Hill bequeathed the Hill House to his two daughters Edith Manley and Leola Williams and to his grandson Carlisle Blair Hill, whose father was deceased.⁹ Blair Hill was raised in the house by his two aunts and died in 1986. Norma Hill Duffin is now the owner. Other branches of the Hill and allied families reside in Lincoln Park, and other examples of the early houses are interspersed among the newer dwellings built over the last 40 years.¹⁰

7. Development and history of Lincoln Park is contained in several references including the Afro-American Institute for Historic Preservation and Community Development, Part 111, History of Lincoln Park, p.45, et seq. Additional information provided by Ethel Shelton and Sharyn Duffin.

8. Carlisle L. Hill b. 1895, d. 1925 was buried at Lincoln Park Cemetery.

9. 302 Lincoln was built by Fannie Hill Cook and her husband George, who were married in 1886. It was the home of the Senior Reuben Hill after the 1902 sale of the "Burgundy" property. (See Survey Site M:26/15/2.) Descendants of Vernon Hill (another son of Reuben, Senior) currently occupy homes on Douglass and Lincoln Avenues.

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305 Lincoln Avenue
Attachment 8.4

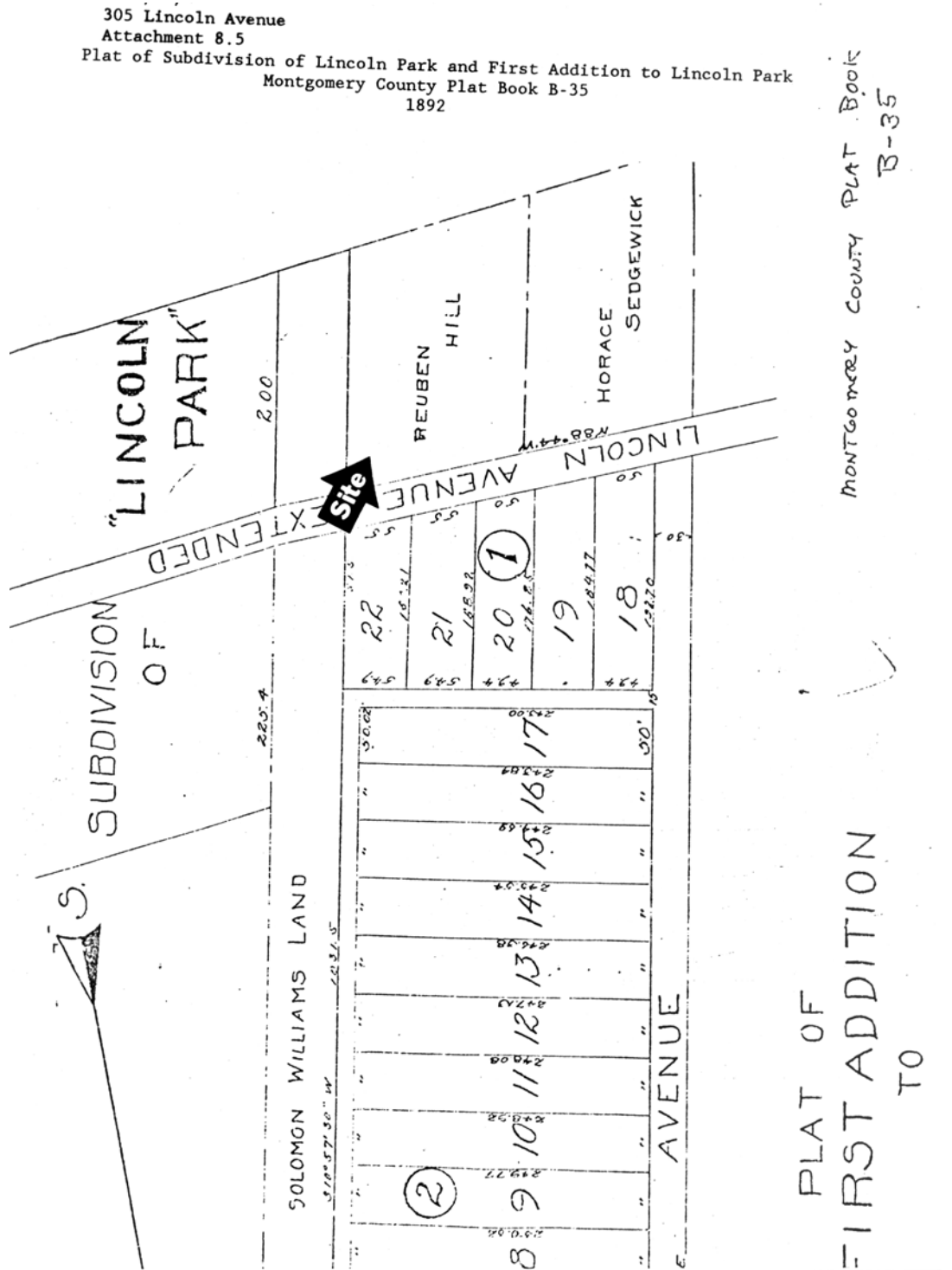
Atlas of Fifteen Miles Around Washington Including The County of Mont
Philadelphia, G.M.Hopkins (1879) p.9.



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Carlisle Blair Hill, 70, radio, TV repairman

JOURNAL
9-17-86

Carlisle Blair Hill, 70, of Rockville, who had been a radio and TV repairman who owned a historic home in Rockville, died of cancer Saturday at Veterans Administration Medical Center in Martinsburg, W.Va.

Mr. Hill was born in Washington. He served in the Army during World War II.

Mr. Hill is survived by an uncle and aunt, William and Victorine Rollins; and a devoted cousin, Norma Hill Duffin.

Friends may call today from 7 to 9 p.m. at Jerusalem United Methodist Church, 21 Wood Lane, Rockville, where services will be tomorrow at 11 a.m. Burial will be in Gate of Heaven Cemetery in Silver Spring. Arrangements were made by the Snowden Funeral Home in Rockville.

The family suggests that memorial contributions be made to the Jerusalem United Methodist Church Home Fund.

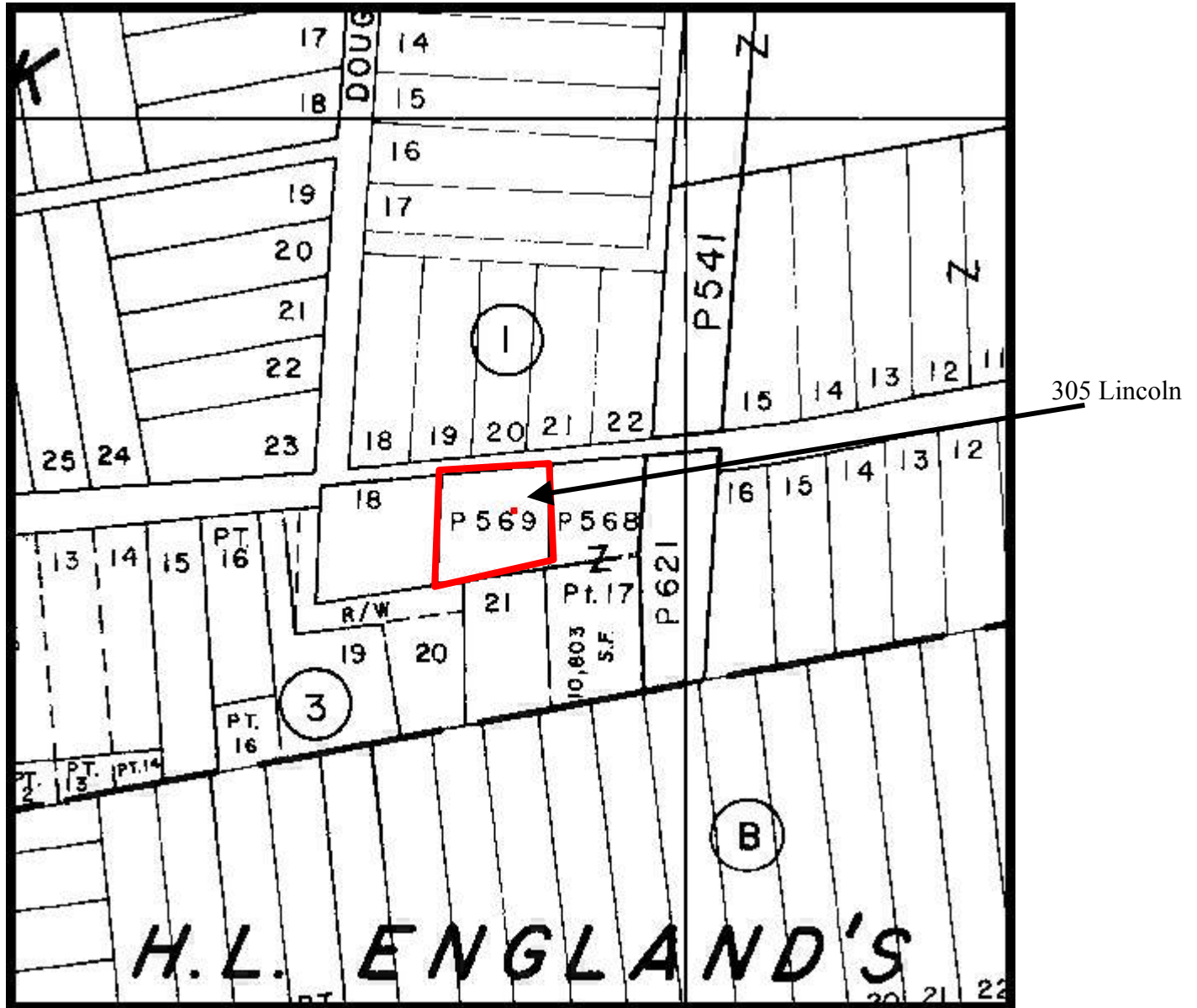
Obituary notice of Carlisle Blair Hill Journal Newspaper 9-17-86. Note that Mr. Hill is said to have "owned a historic home in Rockville".

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Montgomery County Maryland Land records, wills, plats, and tax records. Interviews and histories of Lincoln Park with residents and members of the Hill family. Montgomery County Historical Society collection of maps, plats, records of 1867 ex-slave census, and cemetery records.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of surveyed property 8,276 sq. ft

Acreage of historical setting _____

Quadrangle name _____

Quadrangle scale: _____

Verbal boundary description and justification

Lincoln Park 5966/78 Tax Map Gr33 Parcel P569

11. Form Prepared by

name/title Anne Cissel, History; Judith Christensen, Architectural Description Orig. May 1986 Updated 2002

organization Peerless Rockville, City of Rockville

date

August 2002

street & number P. O. Box 4262

telephone

city or town Rockville

state

Md. 20884-42862

The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to:

Maryland Historical Trust
DHCD/DHCP
100 Community Place
Crownsville, MD 21032-2023
410-514-7600